HIS LATEST BOOK

Brilliant Stories by William Allen White.

Their Motives of Politics and Love.

Kansas, if she were geographically as she is temperamentally, would be involuted, and as ear-shaped as an interrogation mark. The Kansan is born with a question on his lips.

The people of Wichita who read books, all Kansans who read books, are now luxuriating in the latest volume from the pen of William Allen White, entitled "Strategems and Spoils." It consists of five stories of political motifs with an intricate accompaniment of love.

People in New England, in the central states and in the south who are reading these stories are asking no questions. In Kansas the question among all the book-readers is: "Are they true? Did they happen?" and the eternal Kansas suspicion, "Who's he hitting?"

And in the queries there is a world of commendation for the stories, in the questions the very best, the fairest and the most substantial compliment.

It is a great feat to make the prairie-born see a prairie landscape, to charm him from the pasturage of it to the art in it. It is a greater feat to take the personality that has become commonplace by long familiarity, and without violation of the environment, attach to it an absorbing romantic interest.

White's men and women of ink and paper are not photographs. They are in oil. The politician whom one reader will mistake for Jones, and another for Brown is neither, and he is both. He has Brown's ear, and Jones' mouth. Senator Wharton never existed and yet he did exist. Dan Gregg is not biographical. He is as much a fiction as one of Turner's trees with a plaster of green in place of the impossible reproduction of every individual leaf.

Now White has done his best in this: having switched his Kansas reader into watching the sky-line without a subconscious effort to compute the acreage intervening, and having invested the scene with personalities that are strangely familiar and yet palpably fictional, he has deftly shuffled incident and passion together until the mechanism of the thing has vanished, the click and shiver of the kinetoscope have disappeared, and his men and women breathe, walk, laugh, live and with that peculiarly vital tenacity which makes the best of pen-created beings more enduring than real men and women, as Micawber outlasts all who furnished Dickens the type, as Shakespeare's Caesar outlives the historical Caesar.

WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE.

It is a pleasant thing for a Kansas author to gain New England applause with a Kansas story; it is a greater thing for a Kansas author to gain Kansas applause with a Kansas story.

So when the Kansan, fearful that at the time he may have missed something in the dispatches or the newspaper correspondents didn't tell all they knew of a political situation, asks if White's stories "really happened," he is giving the highest commendation a writer of fiction can receive.

How many Kansans will respond to this touch from the author, in a description of a Congressman, defeated for renomination, returning to the Kansas town at night, how familiar the musty 'bus and its fancied circle in the dark:

One rainy night, late in the spring Henry Myton came home to Pleasant Ridge. The light in the great Colorado express train, reflecting from a thousand pools in the road, and the dingy, smoking lamp in the town omnibus, were the only pyrotechnics that greeted him. His trunk crashed upon the rickety baggage-truck, the conductor waved the signal and in the twinkling of an eye the impatient glowing dragon had wormed by; the ruby jewel in the switching tail of it was fading in the distance; and the rain and the dark and the petulant spring wind were left to frolic over the village. Henry Myton climbed into the musty 'bus and listened to the splashing of the horses in the sloppy roads. No street lamp marked their way and to Myton it seemed that the vehicle was circling round and round. Just before he gave up to seasickness, the long, scraping sound of a cramped wheel and the jerking movement of the running gear told Myton that he was near his journey's end.

He scurried across the sidewalk into the office of the hotel. It was a plain room. A high counter ran parallel to one wall. On the counter was a tarnished cigar case and a dog-eared register. Opposite the counter stood an ink-stained desk, surmounted by a gaudy business directory ten years out of date. Near by was a long sink that held a water-bucket, and an earthen wash-bowl over which hung two towels. These, and a threshing machine lithograph, some patent medicine prints, and a big handbill announcing a public sale, were the mural decorations of the room. However, there had been a time when these walls seemed palatial to Henry Myton. Ten years before that rainy spring night, he had received his first five hundred dollar check, after winning the Nettie Gordon murder case. He never came back to the Astor house, Pleasant Ridge, without smiling at the recollection of the vain figure he cut there, leaning upon his elbows, with his back against the high counter, smoking a ten cent cigar, squinting his eyes wisely, and talking of the famous victory. Triumphs—minor triumphs had come to Myton in that room. In the corner by the washstand, he made the combination that brought him the nomination to the state senate. That dog-eared register contained the names of the committeemen who notified him of his second congressional nomination.

And this: "It was early that spring morning after his return from Washington when Myton awoke in his old bed in the Astor house, so early that only a single wagon track had been cut in the muddy main street in front of his window. Yet the sound of the steak-pounding in the kitchen below announced that the business day in Pleasant Ridge was about to begin. He whistled with some show of gayety as he dressed. Frequently he looked up and down the squatty little street, with its sprawling buildings and their ugly wooden awnings. He could see the prairie lying in wait on the hill and the creek crouching below—each checking the growth of the unpainted little thoroughfare.

Here are some expressions of White's characters, the morally good, bad and indifferent men and women of his creation, picked at random through the volume:

"No one is so entirely ignorant of the motives that move men as the practical politician—unless, perhaps, the impractical fellow in politics is to be reckoned with."

A political boss is a hypnotist. He holds his power by a constant repetition, in a thousand ways, of the declaration that his power exists. Every denial of this direct suggestion weakens his influence."

"Honesty in politics is generally considered a luxury for a poor man."

"Desire to win puts a callous on a man that numbs him like the chill of death."

"He felt a blind desire, the indefinable yearning for something strong outside himself—the yearning that older men and women feel when they call on God."

"The fallen ones, the restless ones who spend eternity sobbing for their yesterdays."

"Women have no civic moral sense—they have moral ideals, beautiful, exquisitely formed, delicately balanced. But moral sense comes only after hard practice; it is not hereditary; it may not be learned at school; it comes only after diligent, practical work.

"When he helped his friends with money in a political transaction Senator Wharton took their notes, thus mixing business with politics and keeping his allies true."

"When a man passes his fortieth year his moral lapses are not for the woman, but for a woman, and he is easily irritated.

"Their mutual politeness was inspired by the jealousy that breeds punctiliousness in men more surely than it is bred by friendship or esteem.

"The god of business is an exacting god, and he puts all sorts of warning signs at the mile posts of the years in men's lives. At the sixtieth mile post there is a danger sign which warns men against new enterprises.

"His isolation among his fellows smote him when he saw that he was afraid to advise with his banker and ashamed to talk with his lawyer.

"He had learned long since that the higher the stakes the more likelihood he had of winning.

"He hugged that comfort with drunken affection.

"When the world turns upside down, many strange things come to the top.

"She was tall with the weight that comes to those who like their beef steaks rare, and their game a trifle high, with lines of character, not of worry, in her face, with an easily balanced laugh that often brought out a double chin.

"It's mad enthusiasm that makes things move in the world.

"The speech could not be reported any more than the gyrations of a serpent charming a bird may be put into words

"The men who seem to be leading mobs are really led by mobs; are taken off their feet by waves of impulse and suggestion, so that mob-leaders are really as irresponsible as the mobs.

"Living an entirely emotional life with no thought of anything save the exercise of his power over the multitude, he had been forced into a sort of artificial bloom.

"His clothes were hopelessly new, and he had not yet control of his cuffs.

"The fine exhalation of her femininity expressed in the algebraic terms of a well gowned, well-groomed woman, was soothing his nerves like a perfumed breath.

"He seemed to be in anguish for some power to release his gratification.

"Oh, for some God to snap the fetters of our yesterdays!"

"Reform must come from the individual. It is a matter of slow growth. It is not accomplished by enactment or resolution. When the members of a considerable majority of the people of any neighborhood, any municipality, any state or any nation see a truth clearly enough to make it a part of their rules of conduct that community is reformed. After that the legal enactment comes, making sentiment of the majority law for the unenlightened minority. Some times in history a strong titanic character arises in a land who, by sheer force of will and a powerful example, drags the world about him along toward the light. But reform is still a matter of character—either in the individuals in the mass or in some strong individual out of the mass."

White hopes that his stories of politics have a purpose, that they may be a shoulder to the wheel of civilizing agencies, that they may teach that it pays to speak the truth, to be brave, to be kind, to be helpful.

"Strategems and Spoils" is having a great sale in Kansas and elsewhere.

The volume is handsomely bound, contains [illegible] pages and is published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York and is handled in Wichita by the Goldsmith company.

"The Last of the Dandies."

Apropos of the new play, "The Last of the Dandies," there is a D'Orsay Blessington revival in the London press. Here are two good stories—one of Lady Blessington, the other of D'Orsay.

Lady Blessington's was one of the houses at which Napoleon III, then Prince Louis Napoleon, was most frequently received during his first residence in England, and on his being elected President, she expected to be received at the Elysee Bourbon. Eager as he always was to acknowledge obligations of the kind, he could not venture on such a step; but one day, meeting her in the Bois, he stopped to salute her, and unluckily put the common question: "How long does your ladyship propose to remain in Paris?" "And you, sire," was the ready retort, the point of which remained long enough to blunt.

According to the same writer, Count D'Orsay was returning from a steeple-chase when he was caught in a storm. Looking around him he observed a sailor wrapped up in a loose overcoat of coarse cloth, reaching to his knees. "Will you sell your great coat?" said the count, after tempting the sailor into the public house by the offer of a dram. "Willingly, my lord," answered the sailor pocketing the ten guineas offered him for a garment not worth one. The count put it on and rode into London. The storm had blown over, and he joined the riders in the Park, who all flocked around him with exclamations of "It is original!" "It is charming!" "It is delicious!" "No one but D'Orsay would have thought of such a thing!" The day following all the fashionables wore similar overcoats and behold the invention of the paletot, which, like the tricolor, has made the tour of the world.

Hand-shaking on a level with the shoulders, adds Marmaduke in London Truth, came into fashion through the present Queen, then Princess of Wales, giving her hand at that angle to her guests at a garden party at Marlborough house. Her Royal Highness happened to have an abscess under the right arm at the time, and could not, therefore shake hands on a level with her shoulder.

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